

Sponsoring A Chapter Website: A Practical Guide



For many boards, finding a chapter website sponsor can be intimidating. As with general chapter sponsorship, there's the awkwardness of asking for money and the pressure to make it worthwhile for the potential sponsor along with the discomfort of the added stress of needing revenue to support both the website and the chapter.



When you're already juggling programming, communications and member engagement, website sponsorship can feel like one more thing you're not quite sure how to fit in. We're here to share how easy it can be, and how important it is to do. We think the timing is good for this overview too, if you plan to update your website in the new year.

Plus, you'll hear from one of our customers, Luke Davin, president of the Low Country chapter of the American Culinary Federation (ACF), about how they made website sponsorship work for their chapter.

What does it mean to sponsor a chapter website?

Website sponsorship is an exchange of value. You offer access to your specialized audience through your website in return for financial support, visibility with that audience and the value of association with your chapter. It provides ongoing, round-the-clock visibility and access to a targeted audience, typically chapter members, prospective members, speakers, volunteers and professionals connected to the field. Web sponsorship also offers longevity. Once a logo is on your site, it most likely links to the



sponsor's website; the link doesn't disappear like it would after sponsoring a chapter event or meeting. It's there till sponsorship ends.

Aligning with a trusted organization like yours also provides the sponsor with an additional layer of confidence in their organization. They're seen by those who visit your website as aligning with your chapter's mission and community, without needing to have a physical presence at your chapter events. While you might assume potential sponsors need clicks or conversions, most just want exposure and connection, to know that those who see their name, click on their logo and visit their website might need their services or recognize their brand.

Website sponsorship—a quick win for chapters

Once a web sponsor is in place, web sponsorship is relatively low effort. All you need to do is sign a contract, add their logo and link to your website and review the logo during the year to be sure things still look and function as needed. This streamlined process is much simpler than managing multiple short-term sponsorships, making it a great option for chapters with limited bandwidth. (Trouble getting volunteers to sell sponsorships, anyone?)

Web sponsorships are just easy to execute. You can price it affordably, offer different timeframes or even split up the different sections of the website – have one sponsor for your Home page, one for your event listings, chapter job board, etc.

Chapters get year-round value from web sponsorship. Unlike event sponsorships, your website isn't dormant between events. Being the first place many people go for information, sponsors have steady exposure for little work on your end.

Who to ask

One of the biggest barriers for chapters is determining who to approach as a potential web sponsor. The good news is that you probably already have a good starting list.

- **Existing vendors and service providers.** They already work with your site or your members and operate in your professional ecosystem, like the accounting firms, staffing agencies, consultants, training providers, etc. serving your industry.



- **Member employers.** Many organizations are eager to support their employees' professional development and visibility. Ask your members who you should reach out to; it might be some of your current members.
- **Past sponsors.** You have an existing relationship. A sponsor who supported a single event or part of an event may be open to broader, longer-term visibility.

What to offer

A logo with a link on the website is typically all you need. Placement can vary—in the homepage footer, on a sponsor page or in a sidebar. Just be clear about where the logo will live and what it will link to.

A defined timeframe. Six- or twelve-month sponsorships are common. A clear start and end date helps everyone manage expectations. Even with a timeframe, consider automatically renewable sponsorships, which you may already be doing with your chapter membership renewals; you don't bother the sponsor once they sign up. They're automatically charged at the end of each term, till they decide to no longer sponsor.

Any additional add-ons for website sponsors should be small. Maybe that includes a brief mention in a newsletter, a public thank-you once they sign up or inclusion on a Sponsor page on your website.

Above all, be consistent. Deliver what you promise, keep placements up to date and review sponsorships regularly, all of which builds trust and makes future conversations easier.

Website sponsorship in action: ACF Low Country

ACF Low Country offers website sponsorship as part of their annual sponsorship program, to help offset the cost of their website. They started their program with a sponsorship letter; They created their first sponsorship letter after reviewing letters from other chapters with sponsorship programs. Davin shared the importance of the letter personalized; ask someone on your board, like the president, chair or even committee members to draft the letter, so that it's personal and allows potential sponsors hear the benefits of web sponsorship from different voices. Once they'd drafted the letter, Low Country ACF shared it with their board for review and voted to adopt the letter for the year.

Davin says it's important to be specific about what you want. They have three tiers of sponsorship, and they price each tier differently. "Options will help you get people that don't have the budget but want



to support you,” he explains. “They can select the lower tier, and there will be others that are interested in doing more.”

He also pointed to StarChapter for success with their web sponsorship program. StarChapter showed that the organization’s logo could be in multiple places on their website, with a click through to the sponsoring organization. The chapter also includes web sponsor logos on printed collateral they create for meetings, as well as emails, event invitations, etc.

Davin shared multiple times that being honest and grateful has helped with their sponsorship program, specifically their website sponsorship, and he closed with this: “StarChapter has been very helpful for our chapter, giving us a lot of capacity to grow into open us up to do a lot of things: content, publishing videos, etc.”

Don’t overthink it

Keep the conversation simple. You’re inviting someone to support a professional community they already have a connection with. You just need to explain that connection: who your audience is, the visibility they get and why web sponsorship would be a good fit for their organization.

Start the conversation, see what resonates and adjust as you go. You may find that what once felt intimidating becomes one of the simplest—and most sustainable—ways to support your chapter’s work.

